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SAVION GLOVER -- OM ** out of ****

BROADWAY BY THE YEAR 1990-2014 *** out of ****

So much theater is here and then gone in the blink of an eye. Has it really been two and a half years since Newsies opened on Broadway? It closes in August and will rank as one of the few shows (just over 100) in history to run for more than 1,000 performances. And yet it seemed to arrive yesterday. That's even truer for one-time events, limited runs and those precious shows that simply don't run nearly as long as they should. Before I review a limited run of Savion Glover's latest and a one-time event that is already history, here are three events coming up.

DUBLINERS: A QUARTET -- ONLINE

Most great theater occurs in a few major cities like London and New York as well as on tour. But no matter where you are in the world, this Saturday or Sunday you can watch a free live streaming performance of the radio play [Dubliners: A Quartet](#). Held at the [Greene Space](#) -- a downtown performance space and home for WNYC and WQXR -- it's an evening of music and song and adaptations of four short stories taken from James Joyce's classic work *Dubliners*. This work has already inspired a lovely stage musical and director John Houston's moving final film. And since the live performances of August Wilson's *Century Cycle* at the [Greene Space](#) was one of last year's theatrical highlights, you shouldn't miss this. And you don't have to. Anyone can go online and watch a live streaming of the event Saturday night or Sunday afternoon. If you miss that, they'll be releasing it as a podcast and on-demand video in July. [Go here for more info and to see how you can join in this event for free.](#)

THE AMBASSADOR REVUE AT TOWN HALL

If you're lucky enough to be in NYC this weekend, Friday night features a one-night only performance of [The Ambassador Revue](#), the toast of Paris in 1928. Porter had a Broadway hit that same year appropriately called *Paris*, a show that featured "Let's Misbehave" and "Let's Do It." That success overshadowed his revue and Porter never looked back...and *The Ambassador Revue* never played in America till now. Bringing it to life is Tom Wopat, Jason Graae and Amy Burton among others, led by the marvelous Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks, specialists in the music of the 1920s and 1930s and the band I'd choose to perform at my wedding. Let's hope someone is recording this one. [Go here for ticket info.](#)

THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATER AWARDS

The Ambassador Revue is a rare chance to glimpse musical theater's past. If you want to glimpse musical theater's future, head to the [National High School Musical Theater Awards](#) on Monday June 30 at 7:30 pm on Broadway at the Minskoff. Winners of competitions held all across the country get to perform on a Broadway stage and compete for the big prize, nicknamed the Jimmy. I attended a recent event that was the culmination of nationwide contests where teens performed monologues by August Wilson and it was great fun. You can check out the nominees (or to be more positive, the winners of their region) [right here](#) or hear them strut their stuff on Monday night.

Now on to the reviews.

SAVION GLOVER -- OM ** out of **** **JOYCE THEATER**

If the guest I brought to this performance were writing the review, it would be far less pleasant. "Savion Glover's a genius! Why should he be bothered to entertain the audience?" asked my friend scathingly. Indeed, several dozen people left during this spiritual journey called Om, which is the antithesis of the delightful, crowd-pleasing STePz, one of my favorite shows of 2013. Indeed, the show seemed intent on making this private meditation as difficult as possible for those attending.

It began late, even though the show starts with a darkened auditorium and a lowered curtain while a lengthy jazz recording (Kenny Garrett's "Calling," apparently) played for five or ten minutes. Eventually, the curtain rose to a beautiful setting: a stage filled with candles and yellow lights, scattered with photos of Glover's spiritual fathers, be they dance legends or religious figures like Gandhi. Five rectangular platforms were grouped towards the front, two roughly near each other at the center, one on stage left and two at an angle on stage right. Glover was on one of the two roughly at center and never moved from it for the entire evening. The lighting stayed dim, he tapped with his usual fluidity and grace and precision and power, and the evening progressed.

At first, we were given a few changes: more dancers arrived and took their places on the other platforms, some songs and chants were played, ranging from a spoken-word piece quoting Psalm 23 to selections from other faiths, a quick cross-cultural survey that captured the world-wide yearning for spirituality and faith. Another tune - which I couldn't identify -- might have been a spiritual or blues (Odetta? Maybe?). For a brief passage early on, all the dancers performed in unison. But then the music focused slowly on a piece (from India, I assume) that lasted for 30 or 40 minutes. Glover's long-time collaborator Marshall Davis Jr. had more extensive work to do, especially on one concise duet but he left the stage for lengthy periods. The other dancers had literally nothing to do, posing in place, assuming spiritual or meditative poses, hitting a chime, moving briefly and then posing for minutes at a time and so on. Especially unfortunate were the disciples who came out and sat at their feet like adoring acolytes.

As the one piece of music went on and on -- Glover dancing with his usual inventive brilliance -- the static nature of the evening wore on you. It was almost rude if not self-indulgent to see so many talented dancers allowed only the most cursory moments to perform but otherwise be simply decorative. It was like a jazz combo filled with talented artists but most of the concert included only a drum solo while the other artists simply stood there and watched.

And yet I feel inclined to take Glover at his word. Perhaps this was a meditation best left in the rehearsal room or his private dance space, but surely it was sincere if misguided. He has often spoken of his increasing fascination with the percussive, rhythmic, musical nature of tap. And this evening focused on it like never before. The subdued lighting and almost entire lack of movement left you little else to focus on but the sound of his tapping. And it did indeed achieve moments of engaged, focus brilliance. I've listened to recordings of Fred Astaire with a jazz combo, singing his songs and then soloing on tap, which sounds silly. (Just listening to someone dance?) But it makes sense when it's so musical and well-thought out...and lasting for brief passages in a song that usually lasts three or four minutes at most.

Glover was surely preaching to the converted here. But the best ministers know how to vary their sermons and mix in humor and stories and wisdom with the strong stuff of salvation and sin. With Om, Glover ended up talking to himself, leaving those hoping for uplift with the awkward feeling that he's already been saved and in the Rapture and we've been left behind.

BROADWAY BY THE YEAR 1990-2014 *** out of **** **TOWN HALL**

[Impresario Scott Siegel](#) caps off his celebration of Broadway By The Year with this recap of key songs from the past 25 years of musical theater. If it wasn't as great as the three earlier editions, well, surely that's because the past 25 years haven't been nearly as good as the 1930s and the 1950s and the 1970s. You can choose the best song from Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Aspects Of Love* or *Lysistrata Jones* or *Miss Saigon*, but they're still not going to be very good, are they? Time and again, as they worked their way from 1990 to 2014's *Beautiful*, you saw Siegel wisely ask a Broadway or cabaret star to tackle a tune that may have appeared in a Broadway show in the past two and a half decades, but actually originated from a much more fertile time period in the past. Hence he cleverly padded the evening with "The Acid Queen", "Fools Fall In Love," "Sing Sing Sing," "The Winner Takes It All," "Stormy Weather" and "Fever." Great songs that were born in the last 25 years? Nope. And thank goodness.

If you're not familiar with Broadway By The Year, it's an ongoing series. Traditionally, they tackle one year from Broadway and a rotating cast of Broadway greats, rising talent and cabaret stars perform some of the best gems of the year along with lesser-known fare that has unjustly slipped from view. This year, Siegel celebrated the series' ongoing vitality by tackling 100 years with 100 stars over four nights. They'll do it again next year, since of course the riches of Broadway make this an easy parlor game to play without having to scrape the barrel...at least until you hit the 1990s and noughts, apparently.

Like any evening of this sort, the evening was mixed bag, though Siegel's venture always brings out the cockeyed optimist in me. Misfires like Lucas Steele's misguided spin on ABBA's "The Winner Takes If All" from *Mamma Mia* and Natalie Toro's melodramatic spin on "With One Look" from *Sunset Boulevard* were easily outweighed by the pluses. Two dance pieces were lots of fun, though oddly they almost followed one another in the first act. Still, Mark Stuart and Mindy Wallace were fun in "Libertango" and Jimmy Sutherland was an excellent last minute replacement on "Sing Sing Sing."

Siegel always helps you make some discoveries, thanks to showcasing the talent he finds in another of his many ventures, [Broadway's Rising Stars](#). (The next one presents the cream of the crops from the top arts programs and takes place July 14 at Town Hall.) For me, the ringer was the performer with the wonderfully absurd name of Oakley Boycott. She was a gangly, notably tall and eye-catching presence when the Broadway By The Year chorus took a spin through "Seasons Of Love" from *Rent*. But she really wowed when doing the comic number "He Vas My Boyfriend" from the ungainly Mel Brooks musical *Young Frankenstein*. Boycott nailed this number (easily the best in that show), milking every laugh like a seasoned pro.

When they turn Robert Altman's movie *Popeye* into a Broadway musical, Boycott simply must play Olive Oyl. (Speaking of casting of future shows, Jeremy Morse tackled "Santa Fe" from *Newsies* but I spent his entire performance thinking, this guy has to play Mickey Rooney...or at least the lead in a revival of *Babe In Arms*.) Another find -- for me -- was Jenn Gambatese, who sang "You Walk With Me" from *The Full Monty* with a lovely voice and a direct simplicity that was disarming. She's starred in the Broadway musicals *Tarzan* and *All Shook Up* and clearly deserves better. And cabaret performer William Blake was a tonic, a truly unique voice that straddles the line between male and female. But this is no crooning, ambisexual Chet Baker; he's a wickedly forceful personality who enlivened "Fever" by daring us to laugh with him as he sashayed and powered his way through that Peggy Lee standard.

Adam Jacobs of *Aladdin* proved he's got the goods, giving his all to a so-so number from *Miss Saigon*, which remains as uninteresting to me as *Les Miserables* is strong. And Rory O'Malley was very funny with "I'm Not That Smart" from *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. But the ladies were strongest: Jeannette Bayardelle did acrobatics through "Fools Fall In Love," NaTasha Yvette Williams did indeed stop the show with the always pointed and hilarious "Stop The Show" from *Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me*, and Terri White was a no-nonsense, astringent delight with "Stormy Weather."

But as so often happens, I'll be thinking longest about Bobby Stegert and his effortlessly charming performance

of "What More Can I Say?" from Falsettos. That William Finn musical is clearly ready to be revived -- at least in concert -- and who better to tackle the role of Marvin than Steggert? If they can't get Giant to Broadway (and they should), hopefully Steggert will get a chance to shine in this show. For the lucky few who caught the latest edition of Siegel's event, they got the chance to see Steggert perform a great number from Broadway's past and perhaps, just perhaps, see a glimpse of what might be in the very near future.

THEATER OF 2014

[Beautiful: The Carole King Musical](#) ***

[Rodney King](#) ***

[Hard Times](#) ** 1/2

[Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead](#) **

[I Could Say More](#) *

[The Loneliness Of The Long Distance Runner](#) **

[Machinal](#) ***

[Outside Mullingar](#) ***

[A Man's A Man](#) * 1/2

[The Tribute Artist](#) ** 1/2

[Transport](#) **

[Prince Igor at the Met](#) **

[The Bridges Of Madison County](#) ** 1/2

[Kung Fu \(at Signature\)](#) **

[Stage Kiss](#) ***

[Satchmo At The Waldorf](#) ***

[Antony and Cleopatra at the Public](#) **

[All The Way](#) ** 1/2

[The Open House \(Will Eno at Signature\)](#) ** 1/2

[Wozzeck \(at Met w Deborah Voigt and Thomas Hampson and Simon O'Neill\)](#)

[Hand To God](#) ***

[Tales From Red Vienna](#) **

[Appropriate \(at Signature\)](#) *

[Rocky](#) * 1/2

[Aladdin](#) ***

[Mothers And Sons](#) **

[Les Miserables](#) *** 1/2

[Breathing Time](#) * 1/2

[Cirque Du Soleil's Amaluna](#) * 1/2

[Heathers The Musical](#) * 1/2

[Red Velvet, at St. Ann's Warehouse](#) ***

[Broadway By The Year 1940-1964](#) *** 1/2

[A Second Chance](#) **

[Guys And Dolls](#) *** 1/2

[If/Then](#) * 1/2

[The Threepenny Opera](#) * 1/2

[A Raisin In The Sun](#) *** 1/2

[The Heir Apparent](#) *** 1/2

[The Realistic Joneses](#) ***

[Lady Day At Emerson's Bar & Grill](#) ***

[The Library](#) **